

A MISSION IN LIFE 3: SUPPORTED BY PRAYER

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. (Colossians 4:3a, NIV)

IF YOU’VE BEEN WITH US IN RECENT WEEKS, you know this isn’t the first time the Apostle Paul asked for prayer. It’s wonderful to see a champion of the faith submit his needs to others, recognizing that the work of God is accomplished so much more completely when we all get involved.

The professional game of golf has moved in a similar direction. Prior to the 1980s, virtually no player spoke of a team concept. But as the door was opened to swing coaches and trainers and sports psychologists to start traveling with players, the team concept took hold. By 2000, nearly every player had such a support group. And key in all of this was not only that the player knew his team, but that the teammates knew each other. Your caddie needed to know how your mental coach wanted you to think on the golf course.

The fellowship of believers can be mistaken for the group of people who show up for the potluck dinner on a Wednesday night at the church social hall. There is fellowship in that, but only casually so. In depth—as it should be—the fellowship of believers is meant to be a functional body bent on the mission of bringing the light of Christ to a dark world.

At the outset of his letter to the Colossians, the apostle Paul wrote of the ways he and his ministry companions had been praying for the people in this local church. It was a prayer of thanksgiving for their evident faith, but also a prayer that they might grow in their wisdom and bear spiritual fruit. Even at a distance, prayer united these men and women to Paul. This wasn’t just Paul and his team or the Colossian elders and their team; this was two teams knit together in mission.

By the end of this letter, though, Paul was turning the tables. He wasn’t just “the minister” bringing the spiritual goods to “the ministered.” Paul recognized that his need for prayer was as great as theirs. So he asked for it: “Pray that the doors are open for my message. And pray that my message is clear.”

In God’s fellowship, we should also be looking to support others in prayer and to be supported. If the best golfers in the world need support of all kinds to make it through the rigors of a tour season, the “best Christians” need prayer and help to make it through the rigors of an hour in a world set against them.

Opening questions When it comes to your golf game, do you go it alone in trying to get better, or do you enlist the help of others? What is most helpful to your improvement? • Who is on your “life team,” helping you mature in wisdom in matters of family and business and faith?

READING 1 John 1:1-7; Hebrews 10:24-25; Colossians 2:2-4

The light of our fellowship (1 John 1)
How does this passage support today’s devotion? What are hallmarks of the fellowship of those in darkness, and the hallmarks of the fellowship of those in the light?

The power of meeting (Hebrews 10)
What are Christ’s people encouraged to do here? What worth do you find in this practice, both as we read it in this passage and as you have experienced it?

Praying for one another (Colossians 2)
What characteristics should mark our praying life? How can you pray for others today? What prayers do you need yourself?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/zOV1L8iQBc>.